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Digital enabled primary care services: Considerations for implementation and up-scaling

Nick Guldemond

Leiden University Medical Center, Netherlands

Digital technology plays a pivotal role in the daily work of family doctors with patients and colleagues. Digital solutions can make healthcare services more timely, collaborative, efficient and tailored to the needs of people. Numerous digital primary care service solutions are currently available for different disease areas. However, these applications are often stand-alone solutions and not suitable for the management of patients with complex needs. Challenges in the use of different applications compromise accessibility, efficiency, user-friendliness and eventual adoption of digital service solutions in daily practice for both patients and health professionals.

Digital service platforms hold to promise to integrate different functionalities like intake and symptom assessment, triage, clinical decision support, care coordination and monitoring in one seamless solution: aiming to improve accessibility, efficiency, collaboration and minimize administrative burden. Such platforms often consist of artificial intelligent driven processes to atomize simple but time-consuming tasks as well as aggregate and analyses various sources of data. No method to evaluate digital health services from the perspective of family doctors exist today and therefore the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) decided to develop a dedicated framework for the assessment digital enabled primary care services. A mixed-method approach composed of a literature review and interviews was performed to collect relevant topics for the assessment framework based on predefined criteria. The topics were clustered in 11 domains (general information, intended use, users, services, governance, evidence, privacy, technology, finances and implementation) and discussed with experts from WONCA. Based on the first concept of the framework, a tool with in total 112 assessment items was developed. Based on the first results, considerations for the use of integrated digital service platforms and their practical implications will be presented.

Biography

Nick Guldemond holds degrees in medicine and electric engineering and a PhD from Maastricht University. He was the CEO and founder of the Medical Field Lab (early 2000) i.e. the first international example of a university hospital based 'living lab' dedicated to science, innovation and societal impact. In 2017, he became Professor for Integrated Care and Technology at Sechenov Medical University and since 2021; he is also Professor for Public Health and Healthcare. In addition, he holds a position as a Senior Researcher at Leiden University Medical Center in the Netherlands. He is associate editor for the Journal of Integrated Care and a member of the editorial board of the European Medical Journal.

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